

A COLLECTOR IN WESTERN CUBA AND THE ISLE OF PINES.

BY REV. H. E. WHEELER.

(Concluded from page 108).

The last few days of my vacation were spent on an excursion to the Isle of Pines, and I was fortunate in having Dr. de la Torre for a travelling companion. Looking at the map one sees that in outline it is very like the profile of an ancient volante, the typical Cuban carriage, and this comparison has been handed down by those who travelled in that curious and now almost forgotten vehicle.

Baron von Humboldt and Aimé Bonpland visited the Island early in the nineteenth century, making important geological and botanical observations. The first conchologist to explore its shores was D. Jose M. Velasquez. This was sometime in the early thirties, but he published no description of the species collected. A little later Count Arthur Morelet made an expedition to the Antilles, sailed around the Isle of Pines, landing near the present capital, Nueva Gerona, on the Casas River. His book, entitled "*Testacea Novissima Insulæ Cubanæ et Americæ Centralis*," describes species collected here as well as in Cuba and Central America. The species described from the Isle of Pines were:

Oleacina follicularis (= *O. subulata*, Pfr?).

Oleacina paragramma (= *O. solidula*, Pfr.).

Cylindrella (*Urocoptis*) *pruinosa*.

Cyclostoma semicanum, a very rare species from the South Coast.²

Cyclostoma pupoides.

Cyclostoma disjunctum (a synonym of *C. moreletiana*, Petit, disjunctum being preoccupied).

Helicina (*Priotrochatella*) *constellata*,³ and *Helicina scopulorum*.

Poey described *Trochatella stellata*⁴ from Velasquez' manuscript. This species is not found on the Sierra de Casas, the home of its nearest congener, *Trochatella constellata*, but on the Sierra de

¹ Published 1849-1851.

² At Carapachi Bei, meaning "Turtles' Bay," a name given to it by the fishermen of Cayman's Islands.

³ See *Revue Zool.*, 1847, p. 147.

⁴ See Poey, *Mem. I.*, pp. 117, 447; and Jay, *Cat.* 1850.

Caballos, a mountain some three miles to the East of Las Casas and across the Casas River.

Gundlach visited the Island about the year 1854 and collected all the species previously described and some others which were described by Poey and Pfeiffer. These were:

Chondropoma dissolutum, Pfr., a species so near *Chondropoma pictum* that it may be worthy of a varietal position only.

Trochatella luteo-apicata, Poey. *Trochatella callosa*, Poey.

Helix (*Jeanneretia*) *pityonesica*, Pfr., which so far as studied does not appear to be distinguishable save, in size from the common *multistriata*.¹

Helix (*Cysticopsis*) *comes*, Poey (near *cubensis*, Pfr.).

Glandinella (*Bulimus*) *poeyanus*, Pfr., together with a new genus, *Pineria*, which is represented by four species only two of which were described from the Isle of Pines. These were: *Pineria beathiana*, Poey, and *Pineria terebra*, Poey. The latter is not only one of the rarest, but also one of the most curious, of land shells.

The only addition to the fauna of the Isle of Pines since Gundlach is *Cerion pinerium*, Dall, and a variety of this species is claimed by its discoverer to be the smallest of the genus.

It was Dr. de la Torre's hope to find some new thing in the Sierra de la Canada in the interior of the Island. But this range proved to be a quartz formation covered with pine trees,² which surely have the right of way, so far as native vegetation is concerned, on the Island. The common grass of this region is *Hypericum galioides*, Lam. At the foot of the mountain, however, we collected

Oleacina oleacea, Fer.

Subulina octona, Brg.

Helix (*Jeanneretia*) *pityonesica*, Pfr. *Thysanophora vortex*, Pfr.

On the Sierra de Casas we collected all the known species from that locality, *Urocoptis pruinosa*, Mor., rather plentifully. There seemed to be two forms of this species, one which was stout and large, the other much more slender, but fully as long. Near Nueva

¹ The generic position of *multistriata* is still problematical, and can only be definitely established by an examination of the soft parts.

² *Pinus caribæa* Morelet. This tree grows also in Western Cuba, Florida and the Bahamas, and until recently (1904) has been confused with *Pinus cubensis* Griseb., the pine of Eastern Cuba.

Gerona we collected two fresh-water species, *Ampullaria conica*, Wood, and *Physa cubensis*, Pfr.

Everywhere we saw great colonies of ants¹ which are there so destructive to vegetation. One of the most dread pests, however, is the *Jejene*² (pronounced hay-hay-nie), a tiny fly, smaller than a gnat, whose sting, while not very painful, raises innumerable little bumps on the skin which smart unpleasantly. They travel in swarms and are not barred by ordinary mosquito netting, and, their favorite time for attack being in the night, one can only escape their ravages under a canopy of closely woven goods. When the Cuban wishes to take off a conceited man, he says: "He knows also where the jejene lays his eggs," something, by the way, which even the Naturalist has not yet discovered.

Of the parrots the *Ara tricolor* is about extinct, but the "*Catarra*" (*Chrysolis leucophala*), the white-headed parrot, is still abundant, as well as the "*Perico*" (*Conurus erops*), a small paroquet with a long tail. Some six thousand of these birds are exported annually for pets, but to be trained to talk must be taken from the nest. The rare "*Cayama*," known to us as the Wood Ibis (*Tantalus loculator*, Linn.), seems here to adorn itself with all the glory it can borrow in a tropical environment.

The giant among the trees of this Island is the *Yagruma*,³ whose dead leaves infold themselves making a good retreat for snails and wasps alike. One of the abundant wild fruits is the *Icaco*⁴ used in preparing a sweet jelly, but this is found also in the coasts of Cuba. At the foot of the Sierra de Casas we saw that peculiar *Anacardium*¹ which produces a huge seed, shaped like a pear, externally to the fruit. The bottle palm,⁵ called in Spanish *Burrigona*, having a bulge in its trunk like an Indian club, could not fail to attract attention, and another common palm was the *Miraguana*,⁶ with slender trunk, whose leaves filled out a circle as perfectly as a daisy.

¹ Spanish "Bibijagua," *Atta cephalotes*.

² *Ecaeta furens*, Poey, not to be mistaken for the larger and less vivacious sand-fly.

³ *Cecropia peltata*. See Prof. Simpson's reference to this and other Cuban trees in the "Collectors' Journal," Vol. I, Nos. 3, 4 and 5. His paper is entitled: "Notes from a Collecting Trip in Cuba."

⁴ *Anacardium occidentale*, L. ⁵ *Colpothrinax wrightii* Griseb. and Wendland.

⁶ *Colpothrinax miraguano*.

What of commercial opportunities in the Isle of Pines? Opinions will vary. But some indication may be had in the fact that out of a total population of eight thousand, five thousand are Americans. The land itself is by no means fertile. There is nothing specially inviting in the scenery, excepting the North Coast, and educational advantages are quite meager. Schools and churches there are, and many cultured people, but morals are at a low ebb generally. The climate is the Island's greatest asset, and its chief products will always be the citrus fruits.

NEW JAPANESE OVULIDÆ.

BY H. A. PILSBRY.

OVULA (NEOSIMNIA) HIRASEI, n. sp. Plate 7, fig. 4.

The shell is fusiform, its greatest diameter contained 2.8 times in the length; thin, bluish white, the ends pale ochre colored for a distance of 4 or 5 mm.; glossy, under the lens showing distinct very fine longitudinal striation, and about 6 oblique, low and well separated spiral cords at the lower end, one or two more than this at the summit. The rest of the surface has a microscopic spiral striation, so minute as to be hardly noticeable except under the compound microscope. The two ends are about equally produced, pointed. Outer lip thickened outside and within, retracted at both ends, very indistinctly angular near the lower end, columella straight and simple. Near the summit there is a low, indistinct spiral swelling very obliquely encircling the axis. Length 28, diam. 10 mm.

Province of Tosa, Japan, Y. Hirase.

This species is longer and less swollen than *O. sowerbyana* Weinkauff (= *Ovulum spelta* Sowb., Thes. p. 480, pl. 100, f. 63, 64, not of Linné). It is decidedly more inflated than *O. carpenteri* Dkr. The axial fold above is quite weak in *O. hirasei*, and the coloration is characteristic.

OVULA NIPPONENSIS, n. sp. Plate 7, fig. 9.

The shell is oval, angular at the ends, glossy, bright flesh-pink gradually becoming paler towards the lip; very indistinctly 4-banded with brown, maculate with brown on the back and behind